

Warren ORI Underway

Wing must train like it fights

1st Lt. Matthew Bates
Airman 1st Class Lauren Sixbey
90 SW Public Affairs

The first week of the Operational Readiness Inspection is behind us, and already the 90th Space Wing is proving that being inspection ready everyday isn't just a motto, it's a reality.

For much of the base, the week started before daylight with a wing-wide recall at 0' dark thirty Monday morning. As the day progressed, inspectors combed through files and office documentation while members of the Mighty Ninety stood by to validate procedures and to answer any and all IG questions.

"I'm very pleased with the sense of urgency that everyone has displayed so far," said Col Evan J Hoapili, 90th Space Wing commander. "It's important to show that we're proud of our mission and prepared to execute at every level. I believe the wing is off to a great start, and I look forward to watching our people in action."

The aerospace medical emergency response team was one of the first base units to put their skills to the test in a simulated aircraft accident. This exercise scenario did not test the wing's overall response to a crisis incident, but it did set the tone for the major accident response exercise that kicked off later in the week, according to Lt. Col. Robert Ritter, 90th Medical Group deputy commander.

"The inspectors wanted to see how well our aeromedical evacuation team would react when it really mattered," he said. "They did a superb job responding to the helicopter crash, and the IG noted the egress procedures were very impressive."

The 90th Security Forces Group also got a little of the spotlight Monday after a series of suspicious activities prompted a heightened sense of vigilance across the wing. According to Lt. Col. Gregory Ditzler, 90th Security Forces deputy commander, security forces personnel did everything that was expected of them.

"The 90 SFG had nothing to fear coming into the ORI because we didn't sit on our laurels after the recent Nuclear Surety Inspection," he said. "Security and law enforcement responses on base and in the field went better than practiced. Post briefings and job knowledge were also on target, but we've got a

long way to go," he added.

Day Two of the ORI further tested the wing's ability to perform under the watchful eyes of inspectors.

While loading stage four of a Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile into a payload transporter Tuesday, a simulated accident led to the death of one person and injuries to two others.

Emergency responders were immediately dispatched to the scene. While tending to the injured, initial tests for hazardous chemicals came back negative. However, subsequent testing detected a chemical known as monomethylhydrazine, which is a fire and health hazard.

"Because there are propulsion components (on the Minuteman III) that are inherently toxic we maintain the capability to deal with (this type of situation) all the time," said Lt. Col. William Starr, 90th Mission Support Group representative to the disaster control group.

"They (the emergency responders) were well trained, well equipped and they have accomplished this type of scenario on several occasions," said Col. Starr.

In addition to the accident scenario, the 90th Operations Group was evaluated on its ability to execute launch orders, and the battle staff had to relocate following a simulated power failure.

Day Three of the ORI posed a particularly difficult challenge for the base. Three people were simulated killed and 15 people injured when two large explosions occurred at approximately 9:30 a.m. at a maintenance training facility on Camp Carlin road, south of 15th Cavalry and south of the main gate.

The wing immediately implemented Exercise Force Protection Condition Delta, and the base sprang into action to confront the long anticipated major accident response exercise portion of the ORI.

"We have to train like we fight," said Col. Hoapili. "We purposely test our performance in demanding scenarios. We're expected to be up to the task to operate, maintain and secure our ICBM force and protect our people, no matter the challenge. I think we've been doing an exceptional job."



Left: A member of the 90th Security Forces Squadron detains an individual during one of the many scenarios designed to test security on base.

Top: Members of the Warren Fire Department respond to an emergency situation during the Operational Readiness Inspection. Throughout the week, emergency responders showcased their skills in handling mass casualty and disaster situations.

Middle: Members of the 90th Security Forces Squadron investigate suspicious activity on base. During the exercise security forces personnel successfully demonstrated their ability to identify and detain individuals who were caught surveilling base facilities and operations.

Bottom: A simulated helicopter crash tested the ability of the aeromedical evacuation team to administer aid to members of the 37th Helicopter Flight.